

# THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

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## REVIEW OF MURDER BY APPOINTMENT

# Spotlight On Drama



**Cynthia Berresse Ploski**  
 Special to the Chronicle

knifed to death. An apparent sex crime.

Three of the Langford family had alibis: Mother Joan (Megan Robinson) and father Richard (Freddy Tobin) and their younger son Charles (Nick DeGarbo). They had been at a dance, except that each had been away for an hour during the course of the evening, a fact that none of them was willing to divulge.

The older son David (Kyle Keiffer) had stayed home all evening, or so he said, but his wet raincoat proved that he had indeed gone out into the storm. Our suspicion falls upon him immediately as the possible killer.

The setting of this Frank Williams play is in England. Since Director Joe Reorda wisely refrained from allowing the cast to use English accents, the environment becomes apparent through the use of words and images we

It was a dark and stormy night—no, it really was—at the Langford's upper class seaside house. On top of the cliff, a young man had been discovered, first savagely beaten and then

recognize as being uniquely British.

The time is 1970, a time when David's professed homosexuality, carrying the sinister overtones of that era, dumps further suspicion on David's head.

Younger son Charles, still in public (boarding) school, had a reputation for enjoying whipping the younger schoolboys, a common disciplinary practice in the England of that epoch. Might he relish beating the victim, found to be a known homosexual, and carry it further to the hedonistic satisfaction of murder?

And what of the delicate, protective mother and the stalwart father, editor of the local newspaper? They seem to have embarrassing family secrets to hide.

The only two characters in this six-character play that seem above suspicion are the flighty, flirtatious Celia (Caitlin Jansen) and the female Detective Sergeant Bradley (Amanda Graeff) who had been sent by the Constable to investigate the killing.

Skillfully, Frank Williams' script casts shadows first on one then the other, then back again, revealing much that had been hidden. The audience, engrossed in figuring out whodunit, is brought to a high point of fear and shock when an abrupt lighting

change signals the dramatic climax.

It's a delight to see the dramatic growth in these actors as they mature.

Megan Robinson, projecting her lines clearly and with sensitivity, brings believability and sparkle to the character of the mother, who must actually be more than twice her age. Newcomer Freddy Tobin makes his character as the father into a reserved, stoic, pillar of the community.

As David, Kyle Keiffer suffers convincingly enough under the burden of suspicion to make the audience place bets on him as the murderer. His younger brother Charles, irascible and irresistible as Nick DeGarbo bumps the plot along with his needling and prying. Amanda Graeff, as Detective-Sergeant Bradley puts plenty of pressure on all members of the Langford family, while Caitlin Jansen as the pretty young man-chasing, gin-drinking schoolgirl infuses the only bit of humor into this serious mystery plot as she flirts with all the reluctant men in the cast.

In the intimacy of the black box theatre, details of set, makeup, costume and lighting assume greater importance that in a larger venue. In this performance, the costumes, (Danny Reorda,) from Mother Langford's sparkly cocktail dress to Charles' frumpy, mis-



Cast of "Murder by Appointment" Caitlin Jansen, Kyle Keiffer, Nick DeGarbo, Megan Robinson, Freddy Tobin, Amanda Graeff

matched shirt and trousers, serve to augment the characterizations, as good costuming should. I only wish Detective Sergeant Bradley could have worn that typical English police cap, or at least a badge to make her appear more official.

The set (Jason Ellis) did exude the elegance of Great Britain in the 1970's, with antique furniture and paintings. This was no seaside cottage—this was indeed a house, although we saw only the living room.

But it is the lighting (Susan Topping) that proved to be the most dramatic element of the set, washing the living room with atmosphere and augmenting the drama at the end of the play.

Rounding out the production crew were Stage Manager James Martinez and Production Designer Danny Reorda.

In this time of budget

crunching in junior colleges (and all education) what Director and drama teacher Joe Reorda has done in helping these students to work towards perfecting their craft and learning about themselves on a deep level, goes to prove that the Arts provide an essential avenue for self expression and self awareness, and MUST be supported, along with math and sciences, in the college curriculum.

Everyone in the audiences of this too-short run of "Murder by Appointment" came away with some new insights into British culture, and the entertainment of a good yarn well presented.

Those who got to see it were fortunate. For those who missed it, by all means be on the lookout for next fall's TSJC drama production; and in the meantime keep entertainment in your lives by attending our excellent SCRT summer shows.



Trinidad Comcast General Manager John Armijo's extended big family of relatives came out in full force to do their share in joining other volunteers in picking up trash along the riverwalk, I-25, Main and Commercial Streets, alleys and lots of nooks and crannies. Kids and adults alike frolic in this dinosaur jumping bag Saturday as part of the annual Comcast Cares festivities at Cimino Park.



## ON THIS DAY IN TRINIDAD

By COSETTE HENRITZE  
 The Chronicle-News

### 50 years ago - 1959

Jessie Like and Maurice East from Trinidad High School addressed the junior high students last week and gave an interest talk about the high school.

Among the topic emphasized was the Code of Honor which is a set of rules drawn up by the high school student body and signed by all the students whereby they agree to obey these rules at the time they enter high school.

They also talked about the importance of a high school education and stressed that the various activities offered and courses offered to students are something to be appreciated and enjoyed by everyone no matter what different interests you may have.

The talk was intended to be one preparatory for the students who will next year be entering high school and it was informative and was appreciated by all eighth grade classes.

### 75 years ago - 1934

Reviewing important activi-

ties at its monthly meeting Monday afternoon, the city federation of woman's clubs went on record with hearty endorsement of the local chamber of commerce and lined itself up in thorough sponsorship of the project to improve and complete highway No. 350, east to La Junta, as a link in the major transcontinental highway.

The federation ladies listened also to I.F. Beauchamp, a member of the state highway advisory board, who spoke urging united action for improvement of highway 350. Mr. Beauchamp spoke on highway building and improvement, and gave the ladies much valuable information on what has been done and what is planned. Fr. Beauchamp was strong in his endorsement of the project to complete the transcontinental highway route now being urged as a federal project.

Mrs. John Fisher, president of the federation, said that the group wanted to join its voice with other community organizations in urging the governor and the members of the Colorado del-

egation in Congress to an effort to secure funds with which to improve the highways.

### 100 years ago - 1909

Prizes amounting to about \$120.00 will probably be offered by the executive committee of the G.A.R. for the best decorations during the coming encampment. The prizes are to be given as an incentive to making the business houses and homes of the city as attractive as possible while the visitors are here. The matter was brought up last evening at the regular meeting of the G.A.R. executive committee by John Weber, chairman of the decoration committee. The plan submitted to the committee is to give three sets of prizes as follows:

For the best decorated business house, first prize \$35; second prize \$15. There will be prizes for window decorations also, and for decorated residential places. It is the intent that these prizes will be awarded to people who do the decorating themselves rather than to those who have professionals do the jobs. There will be plenty of professional work done around town, but this contest is to encourage average citizens to join in the upcoming celebrations.

## New books of regional interest offered

By CATHERINE HOOK  
 Special to The Chronicle-News

Bailouts got you blue? Two new books by local authors may offer escape, as well as elucidation.

A new perspective on one of our region's darkest hours, the Ludlow massacre of 1914, is presented in Thomas G. Andrews' "Killing for Coal" (Harvard, \$29.95). The book's cover immediately swept me back in time (as always occurs when I pass the Columbian Hotel and Molly Brown waves from a balcony): a group of striking miners pose, accoutered in both hats and guns at the San Rafael camp. Local people may recognize their ancestors in the group, as well as in many other numerous historical photographs and personal accounts from the era. Descend into the dank, dark abyss of a coal mine and experience the multitude of dangers early nineteenth-century coal miners faced. Feel yourself in the middle of the crowd on that history-changing day, as labor-activist Mother Jones shouts: "If it is to be slavery or strike, then I say strike - strike - until the last one of you drop into your graves."

Andrews' epilogue brings us deftly up to date on the fate of the old mining towns, some which ironically exist today as swanky ski resorts. He hints that it may serve us well to reflect on the consequences of the Ludlow incident "in a region and a nation that continue to deny the significance or even the existence of class or class conflict."

Thomas G. Andrews teaches history at the University of Colorado, Denver. "Killing for Coal" just recently won Columbia University's Bancroft Prize, the top honor for American history or biography.

On a lighter note, Bon Carbo's own William Bilderback delivers the hopeful proposition that his new children's' book, "The Modern Day Billy the Kid: the 10-10-10 Lesson," might achieve the impossible and inspire your child to save. Bilderback's seven-year old hero, Billy Everykid, learns a lesson on husbandry from his rancher grandfather. Grandpa uses what he terms the "10-10-10 lesson" to lead his grandson to fiscal sobriety. The mathematics is simply and clearly presented, and at the end of the story is a worksheet to test what your child has learned. You

must get the book to find out what this mysterious "10-10-10 lesson" is! (Perhaps it will aid you!)

Bilderback weaves an engaging story to urge children to bypass soda, candy and toys and stash away a few pennies in that piggy bank, as well as think of others less fortunate. He is assisted by retired teacher Esther Cass's whimsical illustrations. Mr. Bilderback informed me that his own grandchildren inspired him to write the story; he is currently working on a book for teen-agers.

Both books are available at the Sunflower Shoppe; 253 N. Commercial Street, next door to Mangino's Farmer's Insurance. We invite you to visit and browse our selection of books, collectibles and works by local artists. Also available is "Las Animas County Ghost Towns and Mining Camps" a locally published guide including maps and photographs; with this, you can walk the steps of "Killing for Coal" physically as well as imaginatively. We are interested in starting a book club discussion on "Killing for Coal." Please call 719-680-2722 for more information or to order a book.